



# R. DANIEL LAVELLE

Councilman, City of Pittsburgh-District 6

Chair, Public Safety



September 24, 2019

The Honorable Stephen Zappala, Esq.  
Allegheny County District Attorney  
436 Grant St  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

District Attorney Zappala-

The images of the violent assault perpetrated by four male employees of the Exxon Mobil gas station in Marshall-Shadeland on two African-American women are shocking, disturbing, and an unacceptable display of disregard for basic humanity.

What is equally disturbing to us as Pittsburghers is the anemic legal response from your office in charging three of the four individuals with misdemeanor and simple assault charges. This raises serious questions about equity in our justice system and the disregard of minority communities. If the clear images of two African-American women being punched, slammed against a gas pump, and dragged across the pavement, *by their hair*, are insufficient to warrant more serious charges, it forces one to wonder where the threshold lies and may set a dangerous precedent for future incidents.

As elected representatives in the City of Pittsburgh, we urge your office to elevate the charges leveled against the men involved in Friday's heinous attack to include, at a minimum, aggravated assault.

Sincerely,

Councilperson R. Daniel Lavelle

Councilperson Rev. Ricky V. Burgess

Councilperson Corey O'Connor

Councilperson Anthony Coghill

Councilperson Darlene Harris

Councilperson Erika Strassburger

Councilperson Bruce Kraus

Councilperson Deborah Gross

Councilperson Theresa K. Smith

